

**VILLAGE OF NORTHFIELD  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
Minutes of May 13, 2014**

- I. ROLL CALL.** Chair Dennis Donahue, Village Trustees Kevin T. Beal, K. David Maxwell, and James R. Wilson. Also present were Acting Village Manager Stephen Fitzhugh, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Pastor Trey Cates (New Life Community Church), Joshua Cates (New Life Community Church), and Kathleen Lott (*Northfield News*).

Chair Donahue called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

- II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** The Board members and the public were asked to rise and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

**III. PUBLIC COMMENT (Scheduled and Unscheduled)**

- a. Pastor Trey Cates, New Life Community Church: Request to Use Village Common for Community Vacation Bible School.** Pastor Cates stated that his church, located on East Street, will be holding vacation bible school the week of July 7-11, 2014. He would like permission to hold outdoor games and activities on the Village Common from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. those nights. The children would be brought over in small groups and there would be adult supervision. Motion by Trustee Maxwell, seconded by Trustee Wilson, to permit the New Life Community Church to use the Village Common on the days and times indicated above. Chair Donahue noted that the Northfield Farmers Market will be using the Common until 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, July 8, 2014. Pastor Cates will be sure that there will be no interference with the market's closing that afternoon. Trustee Beal asked if the children and their parents will be meeting up on the Common. Pastor Cates replied that everyone will be first meeting at the church on East Street. Trustee Wilson asked how many participants were expected. Pastor Cates estimated about fifty (50) or so. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a. April 15, 2014 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Trustee Beal, seconded by Trustee Maxwell, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

**V. APPROVAL OF BILLS**

- a. Validation of Warrant #21-14.** Motion by Trustee Beal, seconded by Trustee Wilson, to validate the previous approval by signature of Warrant #21-14 in the amount of \$293,354.28. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- b. Warrant #22-14.** Motion by Trustee Beal, seconded by Trustee Maxwell, to approve Warrant #22-14 in the amount of \$502,323.35. Chair Donahue noted that this warrant's large amount was mainly due to an electric power purchase, payments for the Village Common Rehabilitation Project, etc. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- c. Warrant #22-14A.** Motion by Trustee Beal, seconded by Trustee Wilson, to approve Warrant #22-14A in the amount of \$1088.96. Manager Fitzhugh explained that this payment was to cover employee uniform expenses since the contract with the new vendor went into effect late last year. The municipality had refused payment until the invoice amounts were adjusted to match the agreed-upon bid price. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

**VI. OLD BUSINESS**

- a. Water System Improvements Projects (Central Street & King Street).** Manager Fitzhugh stated Phelps Engineering engineers had completed most (if not all) of the initial surveying on King Street. There should be a report on this in a couple weeks. Bond votes for this work and the work proposed for Central Street will need to be held beginning this summer. Utility Superintendent Patrick DeMasi now is trying to discover how much more it would cost to perform stormwater work at the same time. Trustee Wilson said that it would make sense to do this work together as it will have to be done eventually. Trustee Maxwell asked if there has been any consideration of sidewalk reconstruction on Central Street as part of this project. The sidewalks on the east side of the street are especially bad.

Manager Fitzhugh stated that sidewalks that would be torn up for access to the water lines would be replaced in an improved condition. Now that the Depot Square Rehabilitation Project is nearly complete, he felt that the remaining Central Street sidewalks should be addressed as part of an expanded civic improvements project focusing on the community's downtown area. Chair Donahue would like this matter brought up at the next Joint Board Meeting (05/27/14).

- b. Proposed Sale of Former Police Station (52 East Street).** Manager Fitzhugh noted that this was the first meeting of the Village Trustees with a voting quorum since the sealed bids were opened (04/25/14). The high bid submitted was from William Lyon in the amount of \$35,000 and this was for both of the East Street properties. Mr. Lyon's plan is to use part of the property for an "automobile hand washing and detailing" facility and the rest for storage and possible rental space. Mr. Lyon has expressed concerns regarding the electric lines and utility pole on the site, which he felt might be a safety hazard. Manager Fitzhugh had someone from Green Mountain Power (GMP) look this over today. Should the Board approve this offer tonight, a notice of intent would need to be posted for thirty (30) days before the sale can be finalized. In addition, the Board would need to appoint a Real Estate Agent to convey the property. Motion by Trustee Maxwell, seconded by Trustee Beal, to approve the sale of the East Street properties to William Lyon for \$35,000. Trustee Maxwell stated that Mr. Lyon has developed properties all over town with success so he has no objection to this sale. He added that Mr. Lyon's bid was significantly higher than the others received. Trustee Beal agreed that this had been a fair offer. Manager Fitzhugh added that the bid amount was comparable with the property appraisals received before the properties were put out to bid. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

Manager Fitzhugh then brought up for discussion the possibility that the proceeds from this sale could be used to purchase a Ford 550 with wing for the Water Department. This vehicle purchase had been discussed earlier and Manager Fitzhugh felt that using the sale proceeds would allow the purchase to be made with cash on hand. Trustee Maxwell would prefer that the sale proceeds be put into a CIP account to address the various problems now plaguing the Municipal Building. Manager Fitzhugh would rather borrow funds for any building renovations. Since the purchase of the vehicle has been budgeted, Trustee Beal would favor purchasing the vehicle now and deciding later whether or not to use the sale proceeds to pay for it. This matter will be on the next meeting agenda.

- c. Village Common Rehabilitation Project.** Manager Fitzhugh stated that the project is nearly complete with only the parking space striping and some landscaping left to be done. The project was projected to be completed by the end of June so it is about one and one-half (1½) months ahead of schedule. The new streetlight fixtures were installed today and the parking spaces should be marked before the week's end. Bonnie Donahue is working on the landscaping with plans to plant some perennials, put down some cedar mulch, etc. Manager Fitzhugh felt that some work on the interior Common should be done next, such as replacing the current streetlights with LED fixtures, resetting the paving blocks, pruning the trees, etc. This should not cost a lot of money and some community members might be willing to help out. Trustee Maxwell asked if the rehabilitation project has remained on budget. Manager Fitzhugh was unsure as some bills are still outstanding and some additional work was added to the project, such as the burying of the cables on the west side. There also needs to be a discussion on who will pay for reworking the bulb-out at the northwest corner. Trustee Maxwell asked how the parking lot by the Merchants Bank was looking. Manager Fitzhugh thought that it had been done very well. Trustee Wilson added that the contractors took their time to address past drainage issues on the site.
- d. LED Streetlight Replacement Project.** Manager Fitzhugh stated that the bid proposals for the LED light fixtures were due tomorrow afternoon (05/14/14) at 2:00 p.m. We expect that there will be three (3) bidders. The bids for installation are due next Wednesday (05/21/14) at the same time. Manager Fitzhugh expects that the whole project will be completed by mid-July. Chair Donahue asked if the new LED light fixtures on the Common interior could become part of this project. Manager Fitzhugh will check with Efficiency Vermont.

- e. **Town Manager Search Process.** Trustee Beal, who is the Chair of the Manager Search Committee, reported that this is the week scheduled for the in-person interviews of the final three (3) candidates. The first candidate was here yesterday (Monday) and he was provided a tour of the municipal facilities and the Northfield community. He later met with the committee members and some of the department heads. Trustee Beal added that the input from the department heads will be an important part of the decision-making process. The second candidate was supposed to be here today but has withdrawn from consideration since his wife does not want to relocate to Vermont. The other candidate will be here tomorrow and will go through the same interview process. Trustee Beal stated that the committee may still decide to bring in additional candidates as there was a good pool of qualified applicants. He added that it was difficult to narrow the list down to the three (3) finalists. Manager Fitzhugh has volunteered to vacate his office and operate out of one of the front offices in order to make room for the new manager during the transition period.

## VII. NEW BUSINESS

- a. **Northfield Observances Request to Use Village Common for Labor Day Weekend Celebration.** Motion by Trustee Wilson, seconded by Trustee Beal, to approve Northfield Observances' request to close the Village Common to through traffic from the evening of Friday, August 29, 2014 through the afternoon of Monday, September 1, 2014. Manager Fitzhugh noted that the requested road closure time of 5:00 p.m. caused some difficulty for some Depot Square merchants and their customers last year. He wondered if it might be possible to postpone this until 8:00 p.m. Trustee Maxwell stated that there are some vendors who need to start setting their tents up at 5:00 p.m. in order to be ready the next morning. Trustee Beal felt that it might be a good idea to ask Northfield Observances to work with the merchants in order reach some sort of compromise. Manager Fitzhugh said that this request can be included in the approval letter that will be sent to Northfield Observances. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- b. **Northfield Observances Request for "No Parking" Ban During Labor Day Parade.** Manager Fitzhugh noted that Northfield Observances is asking for a "no parking" ban the morning of the Labor Day Parade (09/01/14) from the Crescent to Kenyon's Hardware Store on North Main Street. The approval letter will specify that the parade organizers will have to work with the Northfield Emergency Services and Highway Department to ensure that the travelling public will not be too inconvenienced and there is no threat to public safety. Motion by Trustee Beal, seconded by Trustee Wilson, to approve this request with these normal caveats. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- c. **Validation of Annual Village Meeting Warning Approval.** Motion by Trustee Wilson, seconded by Trustee Beal, to validate the previous approval by signature of the Annual Village Meeting warning. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- d. **Public Hearing & Joint Board Meeting: Tuesday, May 27, 2014, 7:00 p.m.** Chair Donahue noted that the public hearing is regarding an unlicensed dog that allegedly has been bothering King Street residents for several years.
- e. **Approval of Recommended Annual Audit Accounting Firm.** Manager Fitzhugh stated that Finance Director Laurie Baroffio sent bid proposal forms to eleven (11) accounting firms (as well as advertising in the newspaper) in order to obtain bid proposals to conduct the audit of the FY 2013/2014 Northfield Town and Village financial statements. Two (2) proposals were received and it is Ms. Baroffio's recommendation that the Town and Village award the bid to Sullivan & Powers, which is located in Montpelier, for their bid amount of \$36,800. Although the other bidder's proposal was about \$5000 less, this other firm is based in Maine and their references did not impress Ms. Baroffio as much as those provided by Sullivan & Powers. Also, Manager Fitzhugh felt that the other firm did not fully understand what an audit of the utility departments would entail. Motion by Trustee Beal, seconded by Trustee Wilson, to hire Sullivan & Powers to conduct the FY 2013/2014 Town Audit for an amount not to exceed \$36,800. It was noted that the accounting firm that had conducted the municipal annual audits for the past few years was excluded from bidding this time as it was felt that it was beneficial to get a different perspective from another firm. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

**VIII. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS.**

- a. **Recognition of Acting Village Manager Stephen Fitzhugh.** Trustee Beal wanted to extend his congratulations to Manager Fitzhugh who recently was appointed a full professor at Norwich University. In addition, starting July 1, 2014, he will be the new Director of the David Crawford School of Engineering. Trustee Beal added that this is especially impressive as Manager Fitzhugh has been providing many hours of municipal service as the Acting Village Manager since last July.

**IX. MANAGER'S REPORT**

- a. **Thomas McCarney Bench Location.** Manager Fitzhugh was contacted by Town Selectman Kenneth Goslant who noted that the bench dedicated to Thomas McCarney was supposed to be placed on the grassy area in front of the Municipal Building rather than being placed by the front door. There was a suggestion that the bench could be moved to the Village Common, where it would be more visible and available for usage. Manager Fitzhugh will investigate further on this matter.
- b. **Jarvis Lane Water Main Replacement.** Manager Fitzhugh stated that the seven hundred foot (700') water main on Jarvis Lane needs to be replaced. The Dufresne Group, which has been evaluating the recent Depot Square rehabilitation work, has offered to perform the engineering services for this project for \$3100. This work would include creating plans, drafting construction bid specifications, obtaining any required work permits, etc. Manager Fitzhugh asked if the Village Trustees were willing in this instance to waive the municipal purchasing policy in order to expedite this matter. Trustee Beal asked if this expense was included in the Village budget. Manager Fitzhugh confirmed that it was in the Water Mains & Side Streets CIP account. Chair Donahue noted that the Dufresne Group has done an outstanding job inspecting the recent construction work. Motion by Trustee Beal, seconded by Trustee Wilson, to waive the municipal purchasing policy and authorize Manager Fitzhugh to enter into an engineering services agreement with the Dufresne Group as indicated above for an amount not to exceed \$3100. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

**X. PUBLIC COMMENT (Unscheduled).** There was none.

**XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION.** Motion by Trustee Beal, seconded by Trustee Wilson to go into executive session, in accordance with 1 VSA 313 (a)(1), in order to discuss a legal matter with Manager Fitzhugh present. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

The Board went into executive session at 8:15 p.m.

Motion by Trustee Beal, seconded by Trustee Wilson, to come out of executive session. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

The Board came out of executive session at 8:45 p.m.

Motion by Trustee Wilson, seconded by Trustee Beal, for the Village of Northfield to enter into a water account repayment plan with Rosa Benoir. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

**XII. ADJOURNMENT.** Motion by Trustee Beal, seconded by Trustee Donahue, to adjourn. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

The Board adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Kenneth L. McCann*

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

These minutes were approved at the Joint Board Meeting of May 27, 2014.